



Air quality in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, has been ranked among the worst in the world. However a new scheme to replace the oldest taxis with new, cleaner models is helping to reduce pollution. Yolande Knell reports from Cairo:

Cairo is **notorious** for its overcrowded roads, irregular driving practices and **rickety** old vehicles, but also for its air pollution. In recent months though, environmental studies **indicate** there have been signs of improvement. That's due in part to the removal of many of the capital's **antiquated** black and white taxis. Most of those dating back to the 1960s and 70s were in a poor state of repair.

After new legislation demanded their removal from the roads, **a low interest loan scheme** was set up with three Egyptian banks so drivers could buy new cars. The government pays about \$900 for old ones to be **scrapped** and advertising on the vehicles helps cover repayments.

The idea has proved popular with customers - they can now travel in air-conditioned comfort - and because the new cabs are metered, they don't have to **haggle over fares**. Banks and car manufacturers are glad for the extra business in tough economic times. As for the taxi drivers, most are delighted to be **behind the wheel** of new cars, although there have been a few complaints about switching from black and white to a plain white colour. 'Our cabs used to look **distinctive**', one man told me 'they were part of our **heritage**, like the pyramids. If you saw them in an old movie, you knew it was shot in Cairo'.

Yolande Knell, BBC News, Cairo

Vocabulary and definitions

notorious	well known or famous for something bad
rickety	in bad condition and likely to break
indicate	show
antiquated	old-fashioned
a low interest loan scheme	an official plan to lend money to drivers specially designed so they can pay it back easily
scrapped	thrown away
haggle over fares	attempting to decide a price which is acceptable to both the passenger and the driver
behind the wheel	driving
distinctive	different and easy to recognise
heritage	belonging to the culture of a particular society such as traditions, language or buildings which still exist from the past

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